

Statement by Mr. Shotaro Yachi, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the Center for International Security and Strategic Studies (CISS) at Mississippi State University and the Center for U.S. – Japan Studies and Cooperation (CJSC) of the Institute for Public Policy Studies at Vanderbilt University for hosting this workshop. As such tragic events as terrorist bomb attacks frequently occur in Southeast Asia, for instance those that occurred in Bali last October, the threat of terrorism is a serious issue in Southeast Asia. Because this issue cannot be solved by a single country, it is necessary that the international community work closely together in the fight against terrorism. In this regard, this workshop is very timely as participants from various countries get together to discuss international cooperation on counter-terrorism in the Asia-Pacific region, in particular in the area of the Malacca Strait.

Before introducing Japan's efforts in this field, please allow me to express my deepest respect for Dr. Janos Radvanyi, Director of the CISS, and Prof. Jim Auer, Director of the CJSC for sparing no efforts to realize this workshop. I am glad that we could make a small contribution in the form of financial assistance from the Japan Foundation. I am very honored indeed to be offered this opportunity of making welcoming remarks.

Now, please kindly allow me to briefly present Japan's strategy for countering terrorism which rests upon three basic policy pillars: (1) strengthening domestic counter-terrorism measures, (2) contributing to broadening international cooperation in the fight against terrorism, and (3) providing counter-terrorism capacity building assistance for developing countries.

With regard to Japan's contribution to broadening international cooperation, since November 2001, based on the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law, Japan has dispatched Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) vessels to the Indian Ocean to refuel vessels of those countries

participating in the Operation Enduring Freedom Maritime Interdiction Operation (OEF-MIO), thus cooperating in international efforts to remove bases for Al-Qaeda and prevent and deter the spread of terrorists. Furthermore, for the purpose of humanitarian assistance, since 2003 Japan has dispatched Self Defense Forces to Iraq.

In the Asia-Pacific region, through such vehicles as ASEAN, ARF, and APEC, Japan has been working vigorously to enhance the international community's political will in the fight against terrorism and to consolidate an international legal framework for counter-terrorism. For instance, this January the Government of Japan hosted the Seminar on the Promotion of Accession to the International Counter-Terrorism Conventions and Protocols. Moreover, the Japan – ASEAN Dialogue on Counter-Terrorism is to be set up in the near future.

With regard to Japan's building assistance for combating terrorism, considering the Asia-Pacific region as a priority area, Japan has provided equipment and technical assistance to countries in this region in such fields as immigration control, aviation security, port and maritime security, and law-enforcement cooperation. In ARF, for instance, Japan held the Workshop on Capacity Building of Maritime Security last December. Furthermore, Japan has decided to establish a program establishing Grant Aid for Cooperation on Counter-Terrorism and Security Enhancement. Japan will continue to contribute to the fight against terrorism under this new program.

It goes without saying that it is important for the entire international community that the Straits of Malacca, which is a crucial sea lane of communications, remain safe and open. Therefore, while fully respecting the sovereignty of the littoral states, it is important to enhance their capacity for maritime law enforcement and mutual cooperation between and among the littoral and user states. It is also particularly important to establish an effective information sharing mechanism among relevant agencies of the countries concerned, and to extend capacity building assistance from the user states to the littoral states. In this regard, Japan, as one of the

major user states of the Straits of Malacca, has provided assistance for maritime telecommunication system development and capacity building for maritime law enforcement agencies, thus strengthening the capabilities of the littoral states to address the issues of piracy and maritime counter-terrorism.

Furthermore, in addressing issues involving the Straits, a comprehensive approach is necessary; that is, not only maritime security but other factors such as safety of navigation and protection of the environment need to be taken into account. In this regard, Japan welcomes the framework for dialogue between the littoral and user states that was established last September at the IMO Jakarta Meeting on the Straits of Malacca and Singapore. Japan hopes that cooperation between the littoral and user states will be promoted further under this framework.

It is my sincere hope that this workshop will be successful in granting a deeper insight into international counter-terrorism cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.